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“It’s all about relationships” – Inaugural health care conference shares best practices for health care improvement

(Anchorage, Alaska) Southcentral Foundation (SCF) is sharing its story of health care reform at its inaugural Nuka System of Care Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, today and tomorrow with more than 160 attendees from across the United States and abroad.

The Nuka System of Care has received national and international attention for its successes in health outcomes, operational efficiencies, and customer and employee satisfaction, placing Nuka on the proverbial map as a best practices model for health care delivery.

“Health care is a pressing topic everywhere,” said SCF President/CEO Katherine Gottlieb. “Over the past decade, we have received an increasing number of requests from organizations around the world to visit us and learn more about our continuing journey with the Nuka System of Care. This conference allows us to more efficiently meet this demand.”

The Nuka System of Care is a collaboration of organizational strategies and processes; medical, behavioral, dental and traditional practices; and supporting infrastructure that work together – in relationship – to support wellness.

Despite significant increases in its customer base, Nuka has resulted in dramatic improvements in health care, including:

- 50 percent decrease in visits to specialists due to improved screening and preventative care;
- 40 percent decline in urgent care and emergency department visits;
- 30 percent decrease in hospital days and admissions;
- 20 percent decline in primary care visits due to significant increases in convenient and cost efficient phone and email interactions; and,
- 92 percent employee and customer satisfaction rates.

“The Nuka System of Care was designed by Alaska Native people for Alaska Native people, but our journey is relevant to anyone wanting to affect better health in their communities,” said Gottlieb.



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This widespread applicability has led to public recommendations by Alaska’s Congressman Don Young, Sen. Lisa Murkowski and Sen. Mark Begich to study the Nuka System of Care as a model for national reform.

This year’s conference theme, “It’s All About Relationships,” explains Nuka’s core philosophy for effective health care delivery.

“By putting relationships at the forefront of what we do and how we do it, the Nuka System of Care will continue to develop and improve for future generations,” said Gottlieb.

A three-day, pre-conference called Core Concepts emphasized relationship building within the health care setting. The workshop provided tools to help create positive relationships through sharing story, understanding personal and professional aspirations, and having good dialogue and productive conversations.

The main conference, happening today and Saturday, offers two tracks. The Nuka 101 track is offered for participants who are new to learning about the Nuka System of Care and contains an in-depth overview and introduction. The Nuka 201 track is offered for participants who are already familiar with Nuka and desire to learn more about SCF’s specific programs. This track includes three categories of presentations: behavioral; improvement and skill building; and medical. Participants have selected a mix of sessions or may attend sessions within one category.

The second day of the main conference, Saturday, focuses on special interest topics designed for participants to rotate through a variant of opportunities to engage in learning and sharing. Participants are also invited to attend SCF’s Family Wellness Festival, 14th Annual Gathering Expo and 5K Fun Run on the Alaska Native Health Campus.

For more information on Southcentral Foundation, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com. For more information on the Nuka System of Care conference, visit <http://www.scf.cc/files/NukaBrochure.pdf>.

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Established in 1982, Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) mission is to work together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services. The nonprofit health care affiliate of Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI), SCF has grown in its 27 years, from a single dental clinic to an internationally recognized, award-winning health care organization that employs more than 1,400 people and manages more than 60 health care programs and services.